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ABSTRACT

This newsletter consists of two parts, the first dealing with issues common to many European countries, and the second with reports from individual countries. Two-thirds of the articles are written in English and the remainder French. Articles written in English include a brief description of the European Foundation Institute of Education and its six initial projects, a discussion of common action on youth unemployment, a discussion of teacher training and supply in Denmark, an exposition of controversy over reform in vocational education in the Federal Republic of Germany, and a report on unification of the Abitur (grammar school requirements) in Germany. Also in English are a discussion of Ireland's unified system of higher education, reports from the Netherlands on university entrance rules, a program for education of underprivileged groups, the creation of a foundation for curriculum development, and Swedish reports on higher education reforms and internationalization of education. Reports from the United Kingdom include discussions of financial problems, the Open University, the teaching of English and French, and other issues. (SD)

NEWS LETTER FAITS NOUVEAUX

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

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Strasbourg

EUROPEAN FOUNDATION INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION OPENS WITH SIX KEY PROJECTS

The European Economic Community and the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education have agreed to sponsor research projects to be conducted by an entirely new educational research organisation, the Institute of Education of the European Cultural Foundation. The projects will include studies of educational leave in Europe, trends in the growth of higher education and the education of migrant workers and their children.

The institute was formally created last November and held its first board meeting in Brussels in mid-January. Among those present were Mr. Guido BRUNNER, the EC Commissioner for Research, Science and Education, Professor Asa BRIGGS, vice-chancellor of Sussex University and chairman of the institute board, and Dr. Ladislav CERYCH, the institute's director.

The institute was set up under the aegis of the European Cultural Foundation (ECF), which has agreed to provide for a three-year period funds totalling US\$ 120,000 annually. The individual projects, however, are expected to attract their own sponsorship.

The institute aims to meet three needs: the need for a single agency to take a broad view of what is happening in education in different countries and collate the individual findings; the need for a centre independent of national governments where information and policies can be evaluated critically; and the need for an independent body able to undertake long-term studies.

Dr. Konrad von MOLTKE, director of the curriculum development group American Studies, Federal Republic of Germany, will lead an investigation sponsored by the Carnegie Council on policies and problems of study leave in Europe, especially in France, Germany, Italy and Sweden.

Professor HECQUET, of the Catholic University of Louvain, is to carry out a study of the trends which indicate that higher education is moving towards a state of "zero growth" in the United States and in several European countries. This project is sponsored by the International Council for Educational Development (ICED).

Dr. CERYCH will direct a study aiming to provide a statistical and comparative account of how different European countries have responded in recent years to the growing demand for post-secondary educational provision for those who might not easily be admitted to traditional universities. It will include an analysis of the impact of the Open University and the polytechnics in Britain, the French instituts universitaires de technologie and the Norwegian district colleges.

Three other major studies are being sponsored by the EC: a study of the constraints on the free movement of students at undergraduate level - this will include course credits and modular systems -, the organisation and financing of youth services in different countries of the EEC, and an examination of the educational needs of migrant (which includes immigrant) workers and their children. Project leaders for these studies are to be announced soon.

The founding members of the Institute are Mr. Guido BRUNNER, Mr. R. GEORIS, Secretary General of the ECF and Mr. James PERKINS, chairman of ICED.

CENTRE EUROPEEN POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT DE LA FORMATION PROFESSIONNELLE

Mi-décembre 1974, le Conseil des Communautés Européennes (Ministres des Affaires Sociales) a marqué son accord sur le contenu matériel du règlement portant création d'un Centre européen pour le développement de la formation professionnelle.

D'après la résolution du Conseil du 21 janvier 1974, la création du Centre européen pour la formation professionnelle s'insère parmi les actions prioritaires du programme d'action sociale. Un tel centre, organisme à vocation scientifique et technique, doté d'un personnel peu nombreux, mais spécialisé, sera à même au niveau communautaire de favoriser l'échange d'informations et d'expériences, de diffuser de la documentation et de lancer des recherches et des actions expérimentales pour faciliter la réalisation des objectifs fixés par le Traité de Rome ou le Conseil en matière de formation professionnelle.

Pour assurer l'indépendance du Centre, le Conseil a marqué son accord pour le doter d'une personnalité juridique qui lui permet de disposer d'une autonomie significative. Le Conseil d'administration sera composé de 30 membres, 9 représentant les gouvernements des Etats membres, 9 les organisations des travailleurs, 9 les organisations des employeurs, et 3 la Commission.

Le Directeur du Centre sera nommé par la Commission sur la base d'une liste de candidats proposés par le Conseil d'administration. Certaines dispositions en matière budgétaire et de contrôle financier ont été également arrêtées par le Conseil des Ministres.

Mi-janvier 1975, le Conseil (Ministres des Affaires Etrangères) a décidé de fixer le siège du Centre à Berlin-Ouest.

Le Centre sera habilité à conclure des contrats de recherche, lancer des projets pilotes et accorder une assistance financière à des actions expérimentales et innovatrices dans le domaine de la formation professionnelle et continue. Il organisera des conférences, séminaires et cours et publiera un Bulletin des Communautés sur la formation professionnelle.

Le Centre, qui assumera ses fonctions mi-1975, aura à sa disposition des crédits s'élevant en 1975 à 600.000 unités de compte (approximativement 3 millions FF), en 1976 à 1,45 million et en 1978 à 1,8 million d'unités de compte.

377:341.16 (4)

Communication à la Presse

COMMON ACTION ON YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND FREE MOVEMENT FOR PROFESSIONS

Ambitious plans for a network of "Euro-Job Centres" for young people were outlined in London in early March by Mr. G. BRUNNER, EC Commissioner for Education, Science and Research. Speaking at his first British press conference since taking over the education brief in October, he said unemployment was a common problem throughout the Communities and was particularly high among the under-25s.

It was not enough to have career teachers in schools. Experts were needed who could advise young people on where and how to use their talents. Such counsellors would need to know about trends in European labour markets and economies. Money should be made available from the EC Social Fund to finance the necessary centres.

Mr. Brunner said he would raise the issue at the June Conference of the Communities' Education Ministers in Luxembourg. Also on the agenda for this meeting will be recommendations for a common programme by the EC Education Committee, which has been discussing seven priority areas specified by last summer's Education Ministers' Conference. Among the topics are the education of migrant workers and their families, the teaching of history and languages, mutual recognition of qualifications by member States and the free mobility of the professions.

Following the recent successful agreement on the freedom of establishment of doctors, Mr. Brunner now hopes to come to similar arrangements for architects, veterinary surgeons, engineers and lawyers.

In February the Council of Ministers, composed of the Ministers of Health of the nine EC countries, agreed in Brussels that each member State would recognise the professional status of doctors (including their rights to practise in the other member States), qualified in one of the member States provided that medical courses were at least six years or 5,500 hours in length. This applies to general practitioners. Specialists need a further training period of 3-5 years to be mutually recognised. The Ministers did not, however, lay down detailed requirements for the various components of the medical degrees to be recognised which are contained in a special Directive. The regulations covering freedom of movement are expected to come into force within the next 18 months.

An advisory committee on the training of doctors is to be set up to keep an eye on the situation. It will comprise one-third representatives of the medical profession, one-third representatives of medical schools and universities and one-third representatives of government qualifying bodies. The Commission of the European Communities is also to establish a Scientific and Technical Committee which will be able to deal with any specific problem that arises.

It is expected that the agreements for the other professions will follow this example.

Mr. Brunner also revealed that a decision was imminent on the Communities' £100m nuclear fusion research centre. Furthermore he announced that the Council of Ministers would be asked to approve a £25m energy research programme when they meet in Brussels in April.

331.G. 327 (4)

The Times Higher Education Supplement, 28.II.1975;
The Times Education Supplement, 7.III.1975.

PART TWO/DEUXIEME PARTIE

BELGIQUE: A L'ETUDE - UN ENSEIGNEMENT INTEGRE DE LA MATERNELLE A L'UNIVERSITE

Après des mois d'étude au sein des Ministères de l'Education nationale, une vaste concertation sur la restructuration du système scolaire et l'adaptation de la pédagogie a commencé mi-mars. Cette concertation groupe les ministres et leurs cabinets, l'administration, les associations de parents et les pouvoirs organisateurs des différents réseaux. Les séances se poursuivront dans les semaines à venir.

Le projet de réforme prévoit que la scolarité deviendra obligatoire à partir de cinq ans, la quasi-totalité des enfants de cet âge fréquentant déjà l'école maternelle. Celle-ci comprendrait donc principalement des classes avec des enfants de 3 à 4 ans. La barrière actuelle, à la fin de l'école maternelle, entre celle-ci et l'enseignement primaire serait supprimée; la maternelle et le primaire constitueront, dans la perspective de la réforme, l'enseignement fondamental qui comprendra trois cycles, un premier pour les enfants des classes maternelles, un deuxième pour ceux de 5 à 8 ans, et un troisième pour ceux de 8 à 11 ans.

Le cycle de 5 à 8 ans sera caractérisé par un enseignement allégé pour la lecture, l'écriture, l'expression orale, le calcul, et grâce au mi-temps pédagogique, un renforcement de ces acquisitions par l'expression corporelle, la musique, la danse, le dessin.

Le cycle de 8 à 11 ans préparera à l'enseignement secondaire. Une fois de plus l'ancienne barrière sera dépassée : la distinction entre la dernière année du fondamental et la première année du secondaire s'atténuera du fait que de 11 à 12 ans il s'agira d'une classe d'observation.

L'enseignement secondaire comprendra un cycle inférieur se terminant à 15 ans avec la fin de la scolarité obligatoire qui serait ainsi portée à dix ans, et un cycle supérieur de trois ans consacré à une formation pré-adulte qui préparera à l'entrée dans la vie professionnelle ou aux études post-secondaires.

L'enseignement rénové et l'enseignement dit traditionnel seront intégrés dans cette réforme dont la pédagogie s'inspirera surtout des expériences de l'enseignement rénové.

Dans la perspective de cette réforme, l'examen de maturité et les structures de l'enseignement post-secondaire sont évidemment à repenser. Le ministre TOUSSAINT, prédécesseur de M. HUMBLET, actuel ministre de l'Education nationale en région francophone, avait déjà créé une commission mixte d'étude Université-Enseignement secondaire. Son rapport, remis début 1975, vient d'être publié dans ses grandes lignes par la presse :

Après une critique de l'examen de maturité tel qu'il se pratique actuellement et une analyse des causes de son échec, le rapport contient une proposition basée sur l'idée qu'orientation et sélection sont complémentaires : il est proposé de créer un Conseil des professeurs des deux dernières années du secondaire, qui aurait mission de déclarer l'élève apte ou inapte à des études post-secondaires, et s'il est apte, de l'orienter au mieux de ses possibilités. Ce Conseil comprendrait, outre les professeurs, le chef d'établissement et un représentant du Centre psycho-medico-social, avec voix délibératives.

Les élèves seraient classés en quatre catégories :

- . élèves aptes dans toutes les disciplines,
- . élèves aptes dans les orientations qu'ils ont déclaré choisir,
- . élèves inaptes dans les orientations choisies, et qu'il faut alors conseiller en leur fournissant des avis,
- . élèves inaptes.

Le dossier comprendrait en outre la preuve des connaissances de base et, selon le cas, des options choisies. On pourrait également y trouver des données concernant la personnalité des candidats. Ce dossier serait réservé, sous le sceau du secret professionnel, à l'université ou à tout autre établissement post-secondaire.

Le rapport demande enfin que soit instaurée une étroite collaboration secondaire-supérieur et, pendant quelques années, un contrôle scientifique de cette expérience.

Parmi les notes insérées en annexe au rapport, celle du professeur G. DE LANDSHEERE, de l'Université de Liège, mérite une attention particulière. Pour lui, il n'est pas souhaitable de confier la responsabilité de la sélection à l'enseignement secondaire. En contre-proposition, il recommande d'organiser une première candidature ou au moins un premier semestre polyvalent dans les universités, avec un noyau de cours communs qui donneraient droit à des unités capitalisables et valorisables dans toute formation post-secondaire, quelle qu'elle soit. En plus de ces cours, les étudiants sûrs d'eux-mêmes pourraient suivre des cours dans l'orientation déjà choisie.

La sélection démocratique et en même temps efficace se trouverait donc dans l'instauration d'un système

souple de formation post-secondaire incluant dans un ensemble intégré l'enseignement universitaire et l'enseignement supérieur non-universitaire avec les "passerelles" nécessaires. Cet enseignement post-secondaire donnerait aussi l'accès aux personnes, jeunes ou moins jeunes, déjà directement engagés dans la vie professionnelle.

M. Humblot, dans un récent discours devant le Conseil culturel francophone, s'est rallié aux principes d'une telle conception. Il estime que "le temps est venu de considérer l'ensemble du réseau d'enseignement supérieur comme un tout intégré bien que différencié, offrant des possibilités diverses mais complémentaires, sous forme de programmes de durée et de niveau différents, mais s'articulant les uns aux autres". L'université, a déclaré le ministre, doit rechercher les voies "dans lesquelles elle pourrait s'engager, non pas pour intégrer l'éducation permanente, mais pour progressivement s'y intégrer elle-même".

37.014,3 (493)

Le Soir, 5/XII/1974; 9/III/1975; B.M.

DENMARK : TEACHER SUPPLY AND TRAINING

The Committee on teacher supply and training, set up in May 1972, submitted its report to the Minister of Education at the end of 1974. The Committee, comprising six experts in the field of teacher education, was given the task of carrying out preliminary studies with regard to the planning and development of teacher training until the year 1985. The Committee was in particular to study the positive and negative effects of a uniform system of teacher training which would cater for both primary and secondary school teachers.

The Committee was of the opinion that more efficient use could be made of teachers, if compartmentalization could be relaxed, thus allowing movement across administrative, age, subject, etc. barriers. As for the supply of teachers, the Committee found it difficult to make estimates, the number of teachers needed being determined by factors such as total pupil population, class size, length of schooling, etc. which are decided at the political and/or trade union level. The Committee suggested, however, that at least 15,200 new primary and secondary teachers would be required by 1977^x, 9,200 in the following quinquennium, and 8,200 in the course of the following five years.

Two governmental initiatives influenced the work of the Committee. In 1972 the government published a bill concerning the nine-year comprehensive school with a supplementary tenth year (cf. News-letter 1/1973) and in 1973 put forward proposals for twelve years of compulsory schooling, the tenth to twelfth years being devoted to vocational training or preparation for further studies (cf. News-letter 3/1973). Underlying these initiatives is a desire to increase equality of educational opportunity, and this is not without significance for teacher education policy. Financial constraints and changes of government have resulted in a postponement of plans to extend the compulsory school to a tenth year and of reforms relating to the upper secondary school.

The Committee expressed the hope that any reform of the school system would be accompanied by a reform of teacher education, and drew particular attention to the following with regard to the promotion of greater co-ordination and flexibility within the school system :

- There should be a uniform system of professional training for teachers regardless of the subjects they would teach in school.
- The links between school and society at large should be strengthened. Teacher training should be planned in such a way that qualifications obtained by teachers would enable them to obtain work outside the field of education, if so desired. Similarly, it should be possible for people with sufficient knowledge in a subject to receive the necessary training to allow them to enter the teaching profession.

^x assuming that the 10th and 12th school year became compulsory

- Teacher training should last between 3 and 5 1/2 years.
- Co-ordination amongst teacher training establishments should be improved.
- Experiments with a unified system of teacher education might be based on certain university centres and there should be improved co-ordination of curricula throughout the period of compulsory schooling.

The Committee recommended the establishment of a further committee with specialist sub-groups to advise on the elaboration of a bill on teacher education.

In the course of its preparatory study the Committee collected a vast amount of data not only on the teacher training system but also on vocational training. The material is reproduced as an appendix to the report. Also given is a suggested model for a unified teacher training course for the 12-year comprehensive school, the two basic elements of which are educational psychology and the subjects to be taught in school.

371.13 (489)

Betaenkning no. 706, 1974,
Laereruddannelse og Laererbehov ; B.P.

FRANCE : REFORME SCOLAIRE - PROPOSITIONS ET REACTIONS

Monsieur R. HABY, Ministre de l'éducation, a présenté, mi-février, ses "propositions pour une modernisation du système éducatif français" (cf. News-Letter/Faits nouveaux 4 et 5/1974), réforme à l'étude depuis mi-1974. Le Ministre a souligné que son projet visait à créer un système éducatif qui corresponde à l'état actuel de la société française. "Mon objectif, a-t-il déclaré, est que la formation de base au lycée et au collège soit accessible dans des conditions qui évitent l'échec ou les redoublements. Cela suppose que l'on se réfère, non plus à l'âge réel des enfants, mais à l'âge mental et qu'on tienne compte des différentes vitesses de maturation selon les individus".

Les propositions

La réforme proposée par M. Haby porte sur la totalité de l'enseignement, depuis les classes maternelles jusqu'au baccalauréat, et prévoit notamment les dispositions suivantes :

- l'enseignement est obligatoire à partir de cinq ans (et non plus six ans). Les enfants peuvent accéder à l'école primaire dès cet âge ;
- l'école primaire est organisée sur six années (trois cycles de deux ans) et non plus sur cinq. L'élève peut sauter une ou deux classes et d'autre part, il n'y a plus de redoublements ;
- l'actuel premier cycle de l'enseignement secondaire devient "l'école moyenne" ou "collège". Les filières sont supprimées. L'école moyenne est divisée en "cycle commun" (classes de 6e et 5e) et "cycle d'orientation" (classes de 4e et 3e) et sanctionnée par un "brevet des collèges". Au cours du cycle d'orientation, les élèves peuvent choisir des options et effectuer des stages préparatoires à l'enseignement technique ;
- après la scolarité obligatoire, les élèves sont dirigés vers les "lycées d'enseignement général et technologique" ou vers les "lycées d'enseignement professionnel". Les premiers regroupent les lycées classiques et les lycées techniques actuels. Ils comprennent un tronc commun important en classes de seconde et première assorti de quelques options, et une classe terminale entièrement optionnelle, avec libre choix des élèves préparant aux études supérieures, l'accès étant toutefois décidé par les universités.

Les seconds, équivalents des actuels collèges d'enseignement technique, délivrent les diplômes de l'enseignement technique ;

le baccalauréat se passe en deux parties. A l'issue de la classe de première, un jury permet ou refuse le passage en terminale. Le baccalauréat est délivré à la fin de celle-ci après réussite dans chacune des quatre options choisies par le candidat. Celui-ci peut se représenter à une ou plusieurs options lors d'une session de septembre ;

des professeurs "brevetés" enseignent dans l'école moyenne à côté des professeurs certifiés. Les actuels professeurs d'enseignement général des collèges sont intégrés à ce corps qui servira ensuite à la promotion des instituteurs. Les professeurs certifiés sont recrutés par concours au niveau du DEUG (baccalauréat + deux années d'études) et formés dans des centres académiques liés aux universités.

Le projet du Ministre de l'éducation prévoit, en outre, de faire participer davantage les parents à la vie de la classe, notamment à l'école primaire, et de renforcer le système de représentation des élèves, en leur donnant progressivement plus de responsabilités.

Les réactions

Dès leur publication, les propositions de M. Haby ont provoqué de vives réactions.

La principale critique adressée au projet de M. Haby, aussi bien par les syndicats d'enseignants que par les principaux mouvements de lycéens ou organismes familiaux est qu'il renforce la sélection et la ségrégation sociale, et cela, dès l'école maternelle.

Egalitaire en apparence, affirment certains, le projet rétablit une sélection par l'âge, dont seront victimes les enfants des milieux défavorisés. L'école élémentaire et maternelle deviendra alors un centre de tri dont l'objectif sera le dégagement précoce d'une élite. Ils dénoncent également "l'officialisation des retards scolaires" camouflés derrière la notion de "rythme propre". En effet, la scolarité à durée variable permettra à quelques privilégiés de sauter des classes et d'arriver ainsi encore plus jeunes dans l'enseignement secondaire.

De nombreux syndicats estiment, pour leur part, que le projet du ministre vise à "adapter le système éducatif afin qu'il réponde mieux aux impératifs de la société capitaliste actuelle." Ils citent comme preuve l'accent mis sur les formations ultra-courtes, la réduction de la durée de la formation technique et professionnelle dans l'enseignement public ouvrant encore plus la voie à la prise en compte par le patronat de cette formation, et l'abandon de la scolarité obligatoire jusqu'à seize ans.

"Le projet transforme les études en une course d'obstacles, reprochent certains ; aux plus chanceux un baccalauréat (qui n'ouvrira pas nécessairement les portes du supérieur) ; aux moins bien lotis, le bénéfice douteux de l'apprentissage et la sortie du collège dès l'âge de quatorze ans".

En ce qui concerne le contenu des enseignements, la plupart des organisations d'enseignants critiquent la réduction et la mise au rencart de disciplines telles que la philosophie, l'histoire ou la géographie qui réduiraient la formation et la culture de nombreux jeunes quittant le collège après deux années de scolarité à un "savoir minimum garanti".

La mise en place du nouveau baccalauréat en deux parties inquiète également la plupart des intéressés. Certains y voient une atteinte grave au droit établi d'accès à l'université et considèrent la classe terminale comme une classe "d'épuration". Les présidents d'université ainsi que la société des agrégés ont, pour leur part, exprimé certaines réserves sur les conditions de passage du secondaire au supérieur. Ils approuvent les options en classe terminale qui faciliteront la transition. Ils souhaitent cependant que l'on évite une

spécialisation excessive et réclament le maintien d'une réglementation nationale pour l'entrée en faculté qui ne devrait pas être laissée aux seules décisions des universités.

En ce qui concerne les enseignants, certains syndicats estiment que le projet de M. Haby constituerait une aggravation de leurs conditions de formation et de recrutement. D'autre part, les présidents d'université déclarent nécessaire l'unification progressive des corps d'enseignants exerçant dans le second degré et marquent leur hostilité à la création d'un corps de professeurs brevetés pour le premier cycle. La formation devrait associer, selon eux, la formation dans la discipline à enseigner, la didactique correspondante et la formation pédagogique comprenant également la pratique et la réflexion sur la pratique.

Parallèlement à ces prises de position, une certaine agitation a marqué la fin du trimestre dans les établissements scolaires : grèves, défilés, manifestations se sont multipliés témoignant du malaise de la jeunesse face à un système où l'école débouche trop souvent sur le chômage ou l'ennui - 25% de jeunes sortent, en effet, de l'école sans formation professionnelle ni diplôme, et sur les 800.000 chômeurs que compte la France actuellement, 40% sont des jeunes de moins de 25 ans.

37.014,3 (44)

Le Monde, février-mars 1975

L'éducation, no.237-238-239 ; C.P.

FRANCE : LES PROJETS DE REORGANISATION DES ETUDES SUPERIEURES

Monsieur J.P. SOISSON, Secrétaire d'Etat aux universités, a présenté fin janvier, au cours d'une conférence de presse, les principes d'action et les orientations du gouvernement en matière d'enseignement supérieur.

Convaincu de la nécessité de faire participer le monde universitaire aux transformations de la société, le Secrétaire d'Etat estime que l'action doit être dirigée selon cinq principes :

- renforcer l'autonomie des établissements et créer entre eux des relations organiques par la mise en place d'une "carte universitaire" ;
- réglementer les conditions d'accès des bacheliers et des travailleurs non bacheliers dans les universités ;
- adapter les formations supérieures au monde du travail ;
- améliorer les conditions de rémunération et de carrière des personnels enseignants et non enseignants ;
- établir une réforme d'ensemble de l'aide de l'Etat aux étudiants.

Pour renforcer l'autonomie des universités, M. Soisson a déjà pris un certain nombre de mesures : à partir de 1976, les crédits seront attribués globalement aux universités. La dotation comprendra à la fois les postes de personnel, les crédits de fonctionnement et d'heures complémentaires, de recherche, certains crédits d'équipement et la subvention de formation continue. Les universités prépareront dès à présent des plans pluriannuels de développement pour l'ensemble de leurs activités de formation et de recherche tandis que le programme annuel sera discuté avec les services du Secrétariat d'Etat. Celui-ci annoncera aux établissements le volume des crédits accordés dès le vote du parlement.

En ce qui concerne l'accès des bacheliers à l'université, la réforme préparée par M. HABY, Ministre de l'éducation, prévoit une classe terminale optionnelle sanctionnée (après le baccalauréat de base obtenu à la fin de la douzième année scolaire) par un examen qui porterait sur les options étudiées par le candidat en fonction de ses futures études supérieures. Le candidat devrait avoir obtenu, dans chacune des options,

les niveaux exigés par une règlementation nationale. Les universités pourraient, chacune en ce qui la concerne, relever les niveaux exigés dans les différentes disciplines.

M. Soisson veut, en outre, ouvrir plus largement les universités aux travailleurs non bacheliers. Un groupe de travail se préoccupe de définir pour eux de nouvelles modalités d'accès. L'idée retenue est, qu'après au moins cinq années d'activité professionnelle, un travailleur non bachelier pourrait se présenter devant un jury qui déterminerait s'il a la motivation et la capacité suffisantes pour entreprendre des études supérieures.

La volonté gouvernementale d'aller de l'avant apparaît également dans le souci d'adapter les formations au monde du travail. M. Soisson s'est déclaré en faveur de l'enseignement par alternance, voie d'avenir pour les universités. Il a aussi l'intention d'introduire dans la réforme du second cycle universitaire, l'obligation pour chaque étudiant d'effectuer un stage en dehors de l'université, stage dont les résultats seront pris en compte pour l'obtention du diplôme.

La réforme de l'aide aux étudiants sera appuyée sur une étude d'ensemble, tant pour le passage du système des bourses à une allocation d'études que pour la révision des aides sociales. Le Secrétaire d'Etat a, d'autre part, proposé aux organisations d'étudiants, ainsi que certaines en avaient fait la demande, de créer une conférence des mouvements d'étudiants qui serait un organe consultatif permanent.

Enfin, en ce qui concerne le statut des enseignants, une négociation est prévue en juin et un projet sera élaboré et présenté au Conseil supérieur de la fonction publique en septembre.

378 ; 37.014.3 (44)

Le Monde, 23/1/1975 ; 19/III/1975 C.P.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY : CONTROVERSIAL REFORM OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Public debate has lately focused on the improvement of vocational training and the measures to reduce unemployment among young people - common problems throughout Europe. In the Federal Republic about 75% of all gainfully employed persons obtain their qualification through vocational training; about one third of them (600,000) by attending full-time vocational schools and two thirds (1,4 million) as apprentices who receive practical on-the-job training in the enterprise and theoretical instruction in the part-time vocational school which is compulsory up to the age of 18. However, the number of places offered by industry, commerce and crafts to apprentices and young workers is steadily decreasing, especially since 1972. In January there were 123,000 unemployed in the 16-20 age group, and it is feared that this figure may rise to some 200,000 (almost 10% of the age group concerned) in the course of the year. Furthermore, the large age cohorts born in the early sixties will be leaving compulsory school in the next five years, and at least 100,000 additional places in vocational training will be required to meet their needs.

These figures have alarmed public opinion. The Federal Government offered to spend 150 million DM out of its economic support fund in 1975 on regional training centres by taking over 80% of their capital costs, the remainder to be financed by the enterprises concerned. This policy will be continued up to 1978 with the aim of creating 50,000 additional training places in the centres. The coalition parties in the Federal Parliament turned down a proposal by the opposition parties to spend at least half of this money on subsidising additional training places by grants of 4,000 DM per place to individual private firms (the cost to an enterprise of a three-year apprenticeship varies between 7,500 DM in crafts and 21,000 DM in big industry).

Furthermore, the Federal Minister of Education and Science, Mr. H. ROHDE, in March submitted a bill on the reform of vocational education to the cabinet which will examine it and present it to parliament by mid-April. The bill is a compromise reached after several months of dispute between Mr. Rohde, the

Social Democratic Party and the trade unions on the one hand, and Mr. H. FRIEDRICHS, Economics Minister, the Liberal Party and the employer organisations on the other. Finally the Federal Chancellor, Mr. H. SCHMIDT, had to intervene to resolve the differences. But the bill is still highly controversial and satisfies neither the trade unions nor the employers, while it is bitterly opposed by the Christian Democratic Parties.

One of the main points of controversy is the future financing of apprenticeship training. The original proposal of a 1% levy on the wage and salary bill of all enterprises to be used to subsidise those firms which provide apprenticeships had been opposed by the Liberals as an intolerable burden for small firms at a time of economic difficulties. The compromise now put forward in the bill is a 0.25% levy to be imposed on each employer or firm provided that the number of employees exceeds 20. However, this levy will not be applied as long as the total number of apprenticeships on offer exceeds by 12.5% the demand by adolescents seeking apprenticeships; only if the total offer sinks below that mark will the levy be imposed and used exclusively to finance new apprenticeships.

The opposition parties reject the levy. They maintain that the levy would yield some 5000 million DM per year or a bonus of some 1040 DM for each of the approximately 480,000 existing apprenticeships - which would be an ineffective incentive. In their opinion, it would not be practicable either to restrict the levy to fully subsidising new places as employers would then discontinue their existing apprenticeship schemes to obtain the levy - which would not guarantee an increase of places offered.

The other main point of controversy is the organisation of vocational training. Initially the Social Democrats advocated the creation of a federal office of vocational education with a regional and local branch structure on which the state, the employers' associations and the trade unions would have had equal representation. This organisation would have assumed responsibility for directing and supervising vocational education and the awarding of professional qualifications, functions at present performed, as far as apprenticeships are concerned, by the chambers of commerce, crafts, industry and agriculture. The compromise now reached maintains the autonomy of the chambers within certain limitations and assigns mainly advisory functions to the new federal institute for vocational education with which the already existing federal institute for research into vocational education will be merged. The new institute will be responsible in particular for assisting the Federal Government in preparing the decrees on recognised vocational training courses including apprenticeships, on their financing, and on the regional training centres. It will furthermore launch pilot projects, carry out statistical and research tasks and promote continued training of adults. However, further tasks may be conferred on the institute by federal decree.

The opposition holds that the regulations proposed will lead to a bureaucratisation of vocational training, and diminish the responsibility of the chambers and the initiative of private enterprise. Furthermore, the necessary co-operation with the vocational schools which are maintained by the Länder is, in the opposition's view, neglected in the bill. To meet this argument the Federal Government is at present preparing an agreement with the Länder on co-operation in this field.

Apart from these controversial issues the bill contains a number of interesting proposals to improve vocational education. It advocates a co-operative system in which the vocational school, the enterprise, the regional training centre and the centre for continued training would share responsibilities. Vocational education should comprise basic training followed by specialised training. Each course should be composed of modules with clearly defined learning objectives. Examinations may be taken after completion of the various course components. Vocational training is regarded as part of upper secondary education, and each course should give access to continued training.

It is expected that the bill may be enacted in the course of the year by the Federal Parliament in which the coalition parties have a majority. However, to enter into force the act needs the approval of the second chamber, the Bundesrat, in which the opposition parties can muster the majority of Länder Governments. Therefore it may well be that the act will fare no better than did the Higher Education Act, which, after

years of controversy, was passed by parliament in December 1974 but is still held up by the second chamber.

377.1: 37.014.3 (430.1)

Akademischer Dienst, 13/III/75 ; v.M.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY : TOWARDS GREATER UNIFICATION OF ABITUR

The Standing Conference of Education Ministers of the eleven Länder at its 169th session at Saarbrücken in February reached an agreement on measures aimed at the unification of the Abitur, the leaving certificate of the grammar school, and adopted uniform requirements for seven Abitur subjects (mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, German, Latin and Greek ; the agreement on social science had to be postponed to a later session at which the remaining subjects will also be considered).

The agreement lays down what levels of knowledge, abilities and skills are to be expected of the candidate in the seven subjects concerned. At the same time the procedure and criteria of evaluation are determined. Furthermore the agreement stipulates the type and number of tests and the procedure as regards written and oral examinations.

The Abitur is not a national examination and only in three of the eleven Länder is it centralised at the Land level. In the remaining eight Länder the individual schools or teachers will in future have to submit the Abitur tests in advance to the Land Inspectorate for approval. Each Abitur test will in future be evaluated by two teachers and, if their evaluations differ markedly, by a third.

This unification, which may seem rather modest to a foreigner, departs strongly from the German tradition of school-based leaving examinations in which the teachers concerned formed the examination board under the chairmanship of, as a rule, their headmaster. It is hoped that these steps towards unification of the Abitur will lead to greater equality of access to higher education where, in the present numerus clausus situation, the marks obtained in the Abitur are decisive.

In the winter term 1974/75 about one fifth of applicants was refused admission. It is expected that in the summer term 1975 admission requirements will become even more severe and accordingly the number of rejected applications even greater. In 1975 there will be a nation-wide numerus clausus in 25 subjects (there were only seven such subjects in 1972/73) and a total numerus clausus for all subjects in five Länder. Grading requirements will have to be raised, e.g. in biology from 2.3 in 1974 to 1.9 in 1975 (the best mark being 1 with 4 as the pass mark), in medicine from 2.0 to 1.9, and in biochemistry from 2.0 to 1.7. The fact that many applicants who have been refused admission in the subject of their choice choose another subject and later revert to their first preference causes an ever increasing prolongation of studies. The average length of time taken to pass from university entrance to graduate level has now reached between five and six years. There is thus a vicious circle between overcrowding of universities and restriction of admission.

It is generally recognised that school marks are still the best predictor of academic success. However, the present situation in which a decimal mark decides the life chances of an adolescent is more and more resented as being absurd by public opinion.

371.279.8 (430.1)

Press notice ; Akademischer Dienst, 20/II/1975 ; v.M.

IRELAND : UNIFIED SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The government has come out in favour of what it calls a comprehensive system of higher education in which the top ranking colleges of technology will be brought into the university sector and give university

degrees. This involves the abolition of the two-year-old National Council for Educational Awards which will be replaced by a Council for Technological Education responsible for validating only diploma and certificate qualifications. The government has thus rejected a binary in favour of a unified system at the higher education level.

Presenting the proposals Mr. R. BURKE, Minister for Education, drew attention to what he saw to be the disadvantages of continuing the binary system. "In a binary system there is the danger that one component could become the poor relation and experience a low level of acceptability on the part of society with its consequences for student population, staffing and resources generally. The continued acceptance of such a system would inhibit that free flow between the two sectors which is necessary in the interests of the students and of society in general. There is the consideration that a valid binary system could not be maintained without a degree of duplication of scarce resources, both of money and of talent, which would be unacceptable in a country of this size."

It was believed at one point that the comprehensive model, although appearing to offer the most efficient use of resources in the long term, would be rejected on account of the general financial situation. Supporters of the binary system had argued that, properly financed, technical education could develop prestige status independent of the universities. To put the technical colleges in with the universities would, they suggested, perpetuate the existing situation in which the universities would have an overbearing influence on the rest of the education system.

As regards finance, the Higher Education Authority in its Progress Report for 1974 warned that university standards were at risk because of inadequate government funding. The Authority was particularly concerned lest the international standing of Irish qualifications be jeopardized. As in other countries the high rate of inflation has done much to weaken the universities' financial position, but the report also points to years of inadequate financing. It notes that while in a limited number of areas the staff:student ratio may be deemed satisfactory, the ratios are generally less favourable by half than those obtaining in British universities. In its first report for 1968-69 the Higher Education Authority set a target ratio of 1:12, but there has, it says, been virtually no progress towards this in the current financial year. The Authority also points to inadequate library facilities and an important backlog in the provision of equipment.

The Authority comes to the conclusion that in the context of current State financing, the university institutions must supplement their current income through student fees and that such fees should form 20% to 25% of the total university income.

378.1 (417)

The Times Higher Education Supplement, 6/XII/74, 14/II/75;
W.F.B.

ITALIE : SUCCES DES ELECTIONS SCOLAIRES

Les premières élections scolaires de l'histoire de l'Italie ont eu lieu au cours de trois dimanches consécutifs aux dates suivantes :

- 9 février : écoles maternelles et primaires
- 16 février : écoles moyennes
- 23 février : établissements et écoles secondaires
- 12 et 13 février : universités.

Ces élections avaient pour objet la mise en place des diverses instances de participation prévues pour la

gestion scolaire ; conseils de district, conseils de classe, conseils d'établissement, collèges des enseignants, bureaux exécutifs etc. (cf. News-letter/Faits Nouveaux 4/74).

Aucun incident notoire n'a marqué le déroulement des scrutins et l'on peut dire que ces élections, de la maternelle au secondaire supérieur, constituent un succès comme en témoignent les pourcentages de participation au plan national : 63% des parents, 72% des élèves des classes supérieures, et 85% des enseignants y ont pris part. Ces chiffres ont dépassé les prévisions les plus optimistes. Seize millions d'Italiens environ ont ainsi exprimé leur choix, les plus hauts pourcentages de participation étant ceux des régions du Nord et du Centre, les plus bas ceux du Mezzogiorno et particulièrement de la Sardaigne.

La campagne d'information lancée depuis plusieurs mois par Monsieur F.M. MALFATTI, Ministre de l'Instruction Publique, avec l'appui des principaux partis politiques et le concours de la presse écrite et parlée, semble donc avoir porté ses fruits. En effet, on a vu une grande partie de la nation se passionner pour les questions scolaires et pour l'ouverture de l'école à la société, et c'était là sans doute le résultat le plus marquant des élections.

L'Italie n'a pas connu, comme d'autres pays, de multiples réformes de son système d'enseignement ; hormis la rénovation du cycle moyen entreprise à partir de 1963, l'école est restée presque inchangée depuis la dernière guerre. Longuement discutés avant d'être approuvés, les décrets MALFATTI font l'effet d'une véritable évolution. Outre la participation des élèves, des parents et des enseignants, ils prévoient celle de syndicalistes, d'industriels, d'élus locaux et de représentants de l'école privée à des "conseils de district" chargés d'organiser tout le système d'éducation dans des zones de 100.000 habitants. En outre, à l'intérieur même des établissements scolaires, diverses instances sont mises en place pour assister à la gestion : parents, enseignants et élèves y siègeront.

Bien que boycottées par les groupuscules gauchistes, ces élections ont intéressé de très près les principales formations politiques. "Il ne s'agit pas de voter pour un parti, avait déclaré la direction du Parti communiste, mais d'exprimer un engagement unitaire, démocratique, antifasciste, pour le renouvellement de l'école et le progrès de la société". L'appel a été entendu puisque les "listes unitaires" des parents d'élèves (comptant des communistes et des catholiques) ont recueilli près de 60% des voix. Les 40% restants se sont divisés entre les tendances et alliances diverses. Les listes de droite n'ont pu recueillir que moins de 5% des votes. Chez les élèves des classes secondaires du deuxième degré les résultats sont identiques : là aussi les "listes unitaires", antifascistes, l'ont emporté largement.

Ainsi, pour l'Italie, l'année scolaire 1974-1975 aura été celle des élections. L'année 1975-1976, quant à elle, verra s'ouvrir le débat sur la réforme, surtout de l'école secondaire supérieure et de l'enseignement post-secondaire.

En ce qui concerne les universités, les étudiants ont été appelés en février à désigner leurs propres délégués dans les conseils d'administration, les oeuvres universitaires et les conseils de faculté. Cependant, 20% seulement des étudiants italiens ont voté et cela, sous les intimidations et parfois les violences des groupuscules extra-parlementaires décidés au boycottage. La participation aux élections a sensiblement varié d'une université à l'autre : 7% à Rome, 17% à Milan, 24% à Bologne et Florence et 38% à Lecce.

Mais, si seule une minorité a voté, cela ne signifie pas, en tout état de cause, que la plus grande partie des étudiants ait souscrit aux thèses des contestataires et les ait fait siennes. La faible participation aux élections universitaires s'explique plutôt par le malaise très répandu face au système universitaire actuel et par la résignation provoquée par une réforme en discussion depuis des années mais pas encore entamée.

ITALIE : REFORME DU RECRUTEMENT DES INSTITUTEURS

Monsieur F.M. MALFATTI, Ministre de l'Instruction Publique, a annoncé un nouveau système pour recruter les enseignants du niveau primaire. Dorénavant les instituteurs devront être titulaires du certificat d'aptitude à l'enseignement primaire comme à présent, et en plus passer un concours d'état. Ce concours comprendra un examen écrit préliminaire sur des sujets pédagogiques d'ordre général. Ceux qui auront été reçus suivront un cours d'une durée de 100 heures dont 40 seront consacrées à la théorie pédagogique et 60 à la pratique. A la fin du cours qui s'échelonnnera sur quatre mois, chaque candidat aura à présenter une thèse sur un sujet choisi par ses professeurs. Si le candidat présente sa thèse avec succès, il lui faudra réussir un examen oral avant d'être nommé à un poste d'enseignant.

La nouveauté de ce système se trouve dans le fait que les instituteurs auront désormais une expérience pratique avant de commencer leur carrière. Dans le passé les concours d'état se limitaient presque exclusivement à un contrôle des connaissances théoriques que les candidats avaient acquises entre 14 et 18 ans à l'école normale pour instituteurs. Ces écoles n'offraient guère de possibilités pour acquérir une expérience pratique et accordaient relativement peu d'importance à la psychologie de l'enfant. La première fois que ces enseignants se trouvaient devant une classe était le moment où ils entraient en fonction comme enseignant titulaire.

Le ministre a fait savoir que le premier examen nouveau style aura lieu au mois de septembre quand il y aura 15.000 postes à pourvoir. Vu la situation difficile sur le marché du travail, on s'attend à 100.000 candidats.

371.13 (45)

The Times Educational Supplement, 4/IV/75 ; W.F.B.

NETHERLANDS : NEW UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE REGULATIONS

The large number of students seeking access to higher education continues to pose problems. In order to allow time for a thorough revision of policy in the field of higher education, the present legal dispositions which permit access to university to be closely controlled, have been extended until August 1978. The government can now regulate the number of new students on the basis of the manpower market. Where, however, market pressures are invoked as a reason for cutting back student numbers in a particular study area, the over-supply of labour must be scientifically proven and all alternative career possibilities examined.

In the debate on this matter the government has always maintained the view that the number of students allowed to follow higher education studies has to be determined by the availability of resources. There is general agreement that financial grants cannot increase in direct proportion to the number of students, and that costs must be brought down. In this respect the government attaches particular importance to research into new methods of teaching which may allow a reduction in teaching staff in relation to student numbers, and is seeking new approaches to the problem of costing higher education courses in co-operation with all parties concerned.

The restriction of admission to faculties where the number of graduates seeking employment is already greater than the demand for such graduates on the labour market must perforce continue. This was recently stated by Dr. G.A. VAN KEMENADE, Minister of Education and Science, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Catholic University of Nijmegen, of which he himself is a former professor. "The present system," the Minister said, "can no longer be regarded as a temporary measure, but must be considered as part of the permanent educational structure."

After examining a number of methods of choosing students for higher education courses in which demand outstrips the number of places available, the government has opted for a system of drawing lots. This

system is at present applicable to courses in medicine, dental surgery, veterinary science, pharmacy, biology, physical education, physical geography, history, English and Dutch. Thirteen thousand candidates have been refused admission to such courses in the current academic year.

The government proposes that the system of drawing lots should in future be applicable to all candidates, irrespective of their level of qualification. At present those who have obtained an average of 7.5 out of 10 points in the school-leaving examination, are admitted to the courses of their choice (with the exception of medicine). The extension of the system to all students would, in the government's opinion, be justified by its general policy of equality of opportunity, as students from the middle and upper classes usually fare better throughout their school careers.

The other alternatives were rejected. A waiting list system found little political support. Selection at the end of a one-year propaedeutic course was rejected, as it would mean a wasted year for those students not allowed to pursue their studies. An entrance examination, it was considered, would reduce the value of the school leaving examination, which serves as the basis for university entrance.

The government recognises that a system of choosing by lot is not ideal, but maintains that it is the least objectionable method in the circumstances. However, the system of drawing lots for entry into higher education is, as could be expected, very unpopular with parents and students and may have repercussions when parliament, in the months to come, will have to decide on the government's education policy, in particular on its budgetary aspects.

378.141.224 (492)

Uitleg 406 ; Nuffic Bulletin 1/1975 ; Le Monde de l'Education no. 4/75 ; A.K.

NETHERLANDS : A POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION PROGRAMME LAUNCHED

Speaking in the parliamentary debate at the end of 1974 on a bill on the education of underprivileged groups, Mr. J.A. VAN KEMENADE, Minister of Education, said that to combat effectively backwardness at school it was necessary to change the existing educational structure and that this was one of the government's aims. In the meantime certain specific measures could be taken within the present structure, in particular in schools where there was a high proportion of underprivileged children. Through a policy of positive discrimination such schools could be accorded special facilities. The Minister was of the opinion that of the three major factors influencing achievement at school - pupil ability, pupil background, and the teaching dispensed - the last two could be influenced.

The objective of the positive discrimination programme is to diminish or eliminate by measures taken within the present educational framework backwardness among underprivileged children. These children would thus have equality of opportunity in reality rather than in theory. Such a policy is not merely to favour access to forms of further education, but rather to permit children to draw the maximum benefit from the education they receive. Each child should be able to develop his abilities to the full.

The Minister, stressing that attention should be paid to methodology and to evaluation, pointed out that positive discrimination measures should be in line with innovations to be introduced later into the teaching system, and should be child-centred with due consideration being given to the socio-cultural background of the child. Programmes should be long-term rather than short-term (the Minister suggested three-year programmes) and should not be terminated, even if good results were obtained rapidly. The programmes should aim to go beyond language development, and parental interest should be encouraged.

The following concrete steps are envisaged at the nursery and primary levels :

- extra teaching staff (as there has been a drop in the birth-rate it is expected that by 1978 there will be a surplus of teachers) ;

- support for the teachers in devising and applying programmes ;
- extra auxiliary staff to lighten the present tasks of the teachers ;
- in-service training for teachers ;
- improved school equipment ;
- closer links between welfare organisations and the schools, thus improving school-family and school-community relations and broadening participation in the educational process.

It is not envisaged that the positive discrimination will be implemented regionally, rather it will be on an individual school basis that the supplementary benefits indicated above will be accorded. It will be possible, however, for schools in a locality, for example inner ring city areas, to form a positive discrimination group. It will be for the schools to request the supplementary aid, which would normally be accorded for a three-year period. To qualify schools would have to have a large proportion of underprivileged children amongst their pupils. For classification purposes the criteria of parental profession has been retained.

376.5 (492)

Uitleg 398 ; A.K.

NETHERLANDS : CREATION OF A FOUNDATION FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

A Foundation for Curriculum Development (Stichting voor Leerplanontwikkeling-SLO) has recently been set up to stimulate and support curriculum reform. The Foundation will have the task of devising curricula and teaching material for specific schools or groups of schools as well as for use in innovation projects.

The Foundation will advise on the financial and organisational aspects of curriculum development as well as on research necessary in this field. It will be for the Foundation to interpret research findings and to examine matters relating to the production and distribution of teaching material. Teachers will be able to seek advice from the Foundation concerning their own curriculum projects, and it will also advise the Minister of Education on national curriculum programmes.

The SLO will be under the chairmanship of Dr. A.M.P. KNOERS, professor of educational sociology at the Catholic University of Nijmegen. In the coming months it is expected to play an influential role in establishing curricula for the projected experimental middle schools and integrated primary schools (cf. News-letter 4/1974). Although other organisations are also active in the field of research and curriculum development, the SLO will function as a much needed co-ordination centre.

371.214 (492)

Documentatieblad 11/1974 ; The Times Educational Supplement 31/1/75 ; A.K.

NORWAY : NEW CULTURAL POLICY

At the beginning of January 1975, the Norwegian parliament debated a report on "New Cultural Policy", prepared by a committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Lars Roar LANGSLET for the Ministry for Church and Education. This report supplements a previous one prepared under the preceding government on the organisation and financing of cultural activities.

The report states that cultural policy, the aim of which should be a qualitatively richer society, should be an integral part of a government's overall policy, but that it is not for the central authorities to define the

concept of culture nor to fix the contents of cultural manifestations, but rather to put forward certain goals for cultural policy. The State would have a central task in this planning, but the goals as regards regional activities would be formulated by regional bodies, since to obtain the objective of cultural democracy it is necessary to pursue a policy of decentralisation. The report envisages that each region will develop its own distinctive cultural institutions, and that at the national level there will be a planning and advisory service for all matters relating to facilities destined for cultural activities.

The report deals with the following areas from the point of view of cultural policy: the arts, libraries, protection of culture, mass media, cultural activities for children and for young people, sport and physical education, outdoor and leisure pursuits, voluntary organisations, nordic and international co-operation.

All cultural activities should have their roots in the immediate surroundings - family, place of residence, place of work, school, etc... Small and economically poor localities as well as densely populated areas, both of which tend to be underprivileged on the cultural level, should receive increased financial grants and aid. The report recommends that a special advisory group be established to consider cultural investment in relation to urban development. The opinions of existing cultural institutions should be sought as regards town planning decisions.

Cultural work among ethnic minorities, Lapps and Finns, should be given priority as well as cultural activities among immigrants. The cultural, economic and social situation for the Lapp population should be examined, and State grants should be given for the development of Lapp arts and other cultural activities, likewise for the Finns. Immigrants should have the same right to cultural development as the other inhabitants. To provide immigrants and foreign employees with an improved library service, it is suggested that a central collection of books in the immigrants' languages should be established. The immigrants would themselves, in time, decide whether they wanted to be assimilated as Norwegians or if they wanted to maintain their own cultures.

The national cultural inheritance should be maintained and developed, but the report also stresses the importance of international cultural co-operation especially with the Nordic countries and the member States of the Council of Europe. Thus, Norway will hold in 1976 the first Conference of Ministers of Culture under the auspices of the Council of Europe.

About one fourth of the Norwegian population consists of children under fifteen years of age, which underlines the importance of cultural activities for and among children. Cultural events for children should be near their homes, and when housing and playgrounds are planned, parents and children should be able to influence the planning. The local cultural council should have the overall responsibility for the cultural activities of children, voluntary organisations should also have a part to play. Toys, literature, music, theatre, films, museums are all included in "child culture". Radio and television are seen as efficient means of enriching the cultural environment of the young.

37.014 (481)

Kyrkje- og undervisningsdepartementet, St.meld. nr.52 (1973-74); B.P.

SPAIN : COMPETITIVE ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS INTRODUCED

For the first time Spanish students are being required to sit a selective admissions examination at all universities and higher technical schools. The Ministry published guidelines for the examination and an explanation of how it should be conducted and evaluated in the Official State Bulletin in January. The publication was final proof that stiff opposition to the plan had been overcome.

A bitter parliamentary debate and strong criticisms from some professional organisations preceded the Ministry decision. Opponents of selection, whatever they might have said publicly, were basically

involved in a struggle to protect class interests : the wealthy and the privileged saw in the proposal a threat to deprive their children of going to university.

Beginning in September 1975 applicants for higher education will not be considered unless they score at least five out of ten possible points on a composite rating system which gives equal weight to the results of their entrance examination, their marks in the obligatory one-year pre-university course and the achievement level of their bachillerato, the upper secondary leaving certificate.

The admissions examination will consist of four exercises, with a 90-minute time limit for the completion of each.

- The first will require candidates to write a composition on a subject which will be announced and explained by a professor in the examination room.
- In the second exercise, students will have to study a text, analyse its content and structure, give it a title and prepare an outline, a résumé and a commentary on it.
- The third part of the examination calls for answers to one question each on mathematics and the Spanish language ; students will be free to choose the two questions they prefer to answer from a list of questions.
- The final requirement is similar : answering two more questions chosen freely from a list dealing with elective study matter.

One more exercise, originally expected to be included in the entrance examinations, was eliminated after discussions between educationists and Ministry officials. This exercise had been intended to assess the degree of mastery of a foreign language. It was scrapped on the grounds that students from well-off families often have the advantage of getting foreign language practice abroad.

The fairness and effectiveness of the selective admissions policy will depend not only on the content of the examination questions and the scoring, but also on whether the professors grading the examinations and those responsible for drawing up the admissions lists remain impartial.

378.141.224 (460)

The Times Higher Education Supplement, 14/II/1975 ; M.B.

SUISSE : RAPPORT DE COMMISSION SUR L'ACCES AUX UNIVERSITES

La Conférence universitaire suisse a rendu public, début 1975, le rapport d'une commission qu'elle avait instituée en septembre 1973. Le rapport est intitulé : "L'accès aux universités en cas de limitation d'accès aux études sur le plan suisse - Contingentement et sélection".

Dans son introduction, la Conférence constate : "Le climat de la politique suisse de l'enseignement, et particulièrement celui de la politique universitaire, s'est profondément altéré au cours des années écoulées. Il y a une décennie, en partie sous l'influence de la haute conjoncture, un grand optimisme régnait encore qui eut pour conséquence en particulier d'augmenter dans tous les cantons les contingents d'élèves des gymnases et ceux des "ayant-droit" aux études universitaires. Maintenant, avec les politiques financières en cours, les universités ont de la peine à adapter leur capacité d'accueil à la demande croissante en places d'études. Il est évident qu'un déséquilibre s'est produit entre le développement des écoles conduisant à l'université et celui des universités. Cependant, dans certains milieux, on se pose de plus en plus la question de savoir si de cette manière, on ne risque pas de former trop d'universitaires et si, par exemple, le système universitaire n'est pas privilégié aux dépens du système de la formation professionnelle. Bien que de telles craintes ne soient probablement pas fondées, il faut reconnaître que le développement des universités

se heurte aujourd'hui à un fort scepticisme".

"Etant donné l'automatisme notable entre les études secondaires et l'université (la maturité donnant droit à l'accès aux études universitaires), le numerus clausus ne saurait constituer, par principe, une mesure judicieuse. L'introduction de limitations d'accès aux études universitaires provoque toute une gamme de conséquences néfastes. Il s'agit d'abord de l'effet de "boule de neige", par lequel des mesures locales de limitations dans une discipline particulière se répercutent dans un bref intervalle dans les disciplines voisines et dans les autres universités. Cela signifie que ces mesures dépasseraient immédiatement le cadre par exemple de la seule médecine ou d'une université particulière, et que des solutions devraient être prises en considération sur le plan suisse."

Dans cette optique le rapport présente le résultat des travaux de la commission sous forme de recommandations dont nous avons retenu les suivantes :

Recommandations générales

- Sur le plan suisse, le nombre des admissions pour une discipline donnée ne doit être limité que si le nombre des inscriptions préalables dépasse de 15 pour cent au moins celui des places d'étude disponibles et qu'il est certain que celui-ci ne puisse être augmenté à temps. S'il est nécessaire d'introduire, dans toute la Suisse, le numerus clausus pour une discipline, l'inscription préalable obligatoire est dès lors indispensable pour cette discipline.
- L'accès à l'université doit être réglé dans un esprit de solidarité confédérale, ce qui signifie que les huit cantons universitaires doivent expressément renoncer à privilégier leurs ressortissants. La Confédération ne disposant, dans ce domaine, que de compétences limitées, il est recommandé aux cantons universitaires de conclure un "Accord de non-discrimination" dont les dispositions d'application tiendront compte, autant que possible, des conceptions formulées ci-après.

Contingentement et sélection

- Si, dans une discipline déterminée, il n'est plus possible d'éviter, sur le plan suisse, l'introduction de mesures restrictives, il conviendra de fixer, au moyen d'un système de contingentement, la part de chaque canton au nombre des ayants droit à l'admission. La Conférence universitaire est chargée d'appliquer ce système de contingentement et de fixer la date de son entrée en vigueur.
- Jusqu'à nouvel avis, les contingents seront fixés d'après les critères suivants : chiffre de la population résidente d'un canton, nombre total des étudiants débutants de l'année précédente, enfin nombre des étudiants immatriculés dans la discipline frappée par le numerus clausus. A l'avenir, ces critères devront encore être affinés, de sorte à tenir compte de l'évolution de la situation.
- Si le système de contingentement est introduit pour une discipline, la Conférence universitaire suisse instituera une commission pour fixer et contrôler les contingents cantonaux, ainsi que pour attribuer un contingent fédéral de réserve. Si des mesures restrictives devaient être prises pour plusieurs disciplines sur le plan suisse, il faudrait envisager la constitution d'un office central d'inscriptions préalables et de contingentement.
- Chaque canton est compétent pour la sélection des étudiants dans les limites de son contingent et institue, pour la sélection des étudiants, une commission mixte, composée de professeurs de gymnase, de conseillers en orientation professionnelle et de professeurs enseignant des disciplines frappées de numerus clausus. Pour juger les candidats, les membres de la commission se fonderont exclusivement sur des critères qualitatifs (résultats obtenus, motivation, capacité prévisible de développement du candidat), où seule une combinaison de différents critères entrera en considération. La référence à un seul critère de décision (tel p. ex. la moyenne obtenue à la maturité, la pondération des différentes notes des maturités, l'avis du

du professeur de gymnase, du conseiller en orientation professionnelle ou du professeur d'université est à écarter. Les décisions prises ne doivent pas être irréversibles, c'est-à-dire qu'il faut donner aux candidats une véritable possibilité d'être soumis à une deuxième évaluation l'année suivante. L'instance de recours sera la commission compétente de la Conférence universitaire suisse.

Recommandations à plus longue échéance

- L'orientation professionnelle universitaire et les services de conseils aux étudiants doivent être développés ; il convient en particulier de donner aux gymnasiens une information meilleure sur l'image des professions universitaires, information plus orientée et éclairant les motivations, et d'examiner si un "apprentissage d'essai" ne permettrait pas de se faire une idée plus précise de l'exercice d'une profession.
- Dans les universités, les objectifs des études doivent être différenciés et les diplômes diversifiés. Il faut aussi examiner si le certifiat de maturité ne pourrait pas donner accès à des études intéressantes en dehors des universités. Enfin, dans le cadre d'une éventuelle étape expérimentale, il faudrait examiner si les objectifs de l'enseignement de gymnase ne pourraient pas être reconsidérés de façon que soit introduite une sorte de "maturité moyenne" donnant accès aux écoles spécialisées supérieures.
- D'une manière générale, il s'agit d'inscrire, dans le cadre de la réforme des études, la préoccupation pour l'enseignement supérieur de mieux tenir compte des exigences de la réalité. Il faut, en outre, élaborer des bases de décision supplémentaires en relation avec les besoins probables de la société future en universitaires, car on ne peut guère imaginer que la demande individuelle en places d'étude demeure le seul critère pour le développement de nos universités.

378.141.224 (494)

Politique de la science, no. 5/1974 ; B.M.

SWEDEN : REVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION STRUCTURES ON THE BASIS OF THE U68 REPORT

The 1968 Education Commission (U68), appointed to put forward proposals for a reform of higher education, published its report in March 1973 (see News-Letter 2/1973). The Commission's recommendations, particularly those concerning the decentralisation of university education, met with much criticism (see News-Letter 3/1974), and as a result the U68 proposals along with some 20,000 pages of comments they provoked were submitted to a six-member all-party parliamentary committee for further consideration.

Revision of the U68 proposals

In several key areas the politicians found the weight of criticism against ideas in the U68 report so strong that they decided either to scrap the original proposals altogether and formulate new ones, or else to modify them extensively.

One such area was the organisational structure of the higher education system. The U68 report wanted to divide the whole country into 19 districts and group most academic institutions in each district into a single entity run by a board made up half of laymen and half of staff and students. Such a structure was vigorously contested. Critics feared that it would create unnecessary centralisation at the district level, rob universities of their identity and let external interests dominate the administration.

The parliamentary committee considered these arguments well-founded and declared that the individual universities and colleges should keep their independence under their own boards, on which two thirds of the members should represent staff and students and one third local interests. Each region should, however, have its own board in which non-university members would form the majority. Besides regional planning,

the board should link individual institutions for purposes of research, should share out teaching personnel and maintain joint services.

The committee recommended that the entire higher education network should be active in research and post-graduate training, and not large establishments alone as proposed in the U68 report. All university lecturers and college teachers with corresponding qualifications should be able to pursue research as a part of their employment.

The working party was in favour of retaining the traditional academic degrees because they were used internationally and provided meaningful information about their holders. In the U68 report it was envisaged that they would be replaced by course completion certificates.

Noting that the demand for higher education places had slowed down considerably of late and that it was expected to slacken still more, the committee said that the building of new higher learning centres or the expansion of existing ones should depend strictly on the demand for study places.

The reform bill

In framing its bill on higher education, to be voted on by parliament in May 1975, the government has drawn heavily on the U68 proposals as revised by the committee and those of the Qualifications Committee (cf. News-Letter 4/1974). In the bill it is proposed to set up an Office for Universities and Colleges (Universitets- och Högskoleämbetet) which will be charged with the central administration of higher education, and six regional administrative bodies (instead of the 19 originally envisaged) which will be responsible for the planning, co-ordination and extension of post-secondary studies. These regional bodies will be situated in towns where universities or colleges already exist (Stockholm, Göteborg, Lund, Uppsala, Umeå and Linköping). The majority on the boards will be held by laymen. On the governing boards of individual institutions the majority will be held by staff and students. Fourteen new colleges will be established in smaller localities.

Higher education will be more vocationally oriented, and will be divided into five principal sectors:

technology ; administration, economics and social work ; medicine ; teaching ; cultural work and information.

The government is seeking a balanced growth in the number of graduates, and in consequence certain restrictions will be placed on admission to higher education to take account of labour market conditions. Applicants who have spent two or three years in the upper secondary school will be admitted on the basis of their school marks. Others will have their work experience taken into account ; a person not having completed the upper secondary school would be admitted to higher education provided he was 25 years of age, had at least four years of work experience (the Qualifications Committee recommended five years) and had a knowledge of English corresponding to the successful completion of the English course in the social line of upper secondary school. Furthermore, he or she must, to be admitted to a specific course, give evidence of possessing the requisite level of competence. It is envisaged that there will be recourse to aptitude tests, if demand outstrips the supply of places. A fixed proportion of places will be set aside for candidates with foreign qualifications.

Having an all-party committee review the U68 proposals may have facilitated the passage of the government's bill through parliament, but criticism in particular in some educational circles is still lively. Opponents of the bill are worried that the new regional boards may have an influence over what is taught in the universities through the distribution of finance, and that they may emphasise the funding of applied, rather than pure, research. It is also feared that political influence may be exerted through the regional boards. Another fear is that higher education will be spread too thinly at a time of falling university applications. The government for its part sees the creation of new institutions as vital if adults

are to have a real chance of participating in short-term higher education courses near their homes or places of work.

378.1 (485)

Svenska Dagbladet, 1/III/75 ; The Times Higher Education Supplement, 28/II/75 ; B.P.

SWEDEN : INTERNATIONALISATION OF EDUCATION

Educational authorities are at present considering the final report of the committee set up in 1972 by the Office of the Chancellor of the Swedish Universities to study the internationalisation of higher education. The committee was chaired by Mr. Bertil ÖSTERGREN, former director of the Swedish confederation of professional associations and was helped in its deliberations by various groups of experts and interested parties.

The Committee notes that many crucial problems have taken on global dimensions and can therefore only be solved by international co-operation. Education should seek to promote international co-operation and solidarity in particular by generating understanding and respect for other peoples and cultures and by providing insight into the relativity of national circumstances, values and social patterns.

Pre-university education

The main task of the committee was to analyse motives and objectives with regard to increased internationalisation of higher education and to put forward proposals in the light of this analysis, but the final report stresses the importance of internationalising education also at the pre-university level.

Indeed, the necessary reorientation would have to start at the pre-primary level, as important attitudes are shaped during the first years of life. At this stage the primary target would be certain fundamental attitudes which though having no specific international link have important implications as regards international understanding - tolerance, ability to co-operate with others, sense of responsibility, etc. Games, songs, stories, films could all serve to create amongst children an international awareness.

International understanding and solidarity already constitute important goals in primary and secondary education, but they should receive increased attention. The Committee therefore felt that syllabuses, textbooks, learning aids, etc. should be revised and given a truly world-wide dimension, not merely national or Western. Effort should also be made to improve foreign language teaching.

In-service training of teachers

The Committee acknowledges the key role of teachers in promoting the internationalisation of education, and it proposes that all teachers should follow an internationally oriented in-service course. Recognising the need for prompt action in this matter the Committee proposes a three-step model. Initially one-week courses set up by the central authorities would train staff to run one-week regional courses, the participants in which would then direct in-service training at the local level.

University level

In its earlier reports (see News-Letter 3/1973), the Committee proposed the introduction of certain internationally oriented courses. As a result, courses in business administration and in Eastern European and Latin American studies have already been established. The final report further proposes a course on peace and conflict theory. But of more importance than specific programmes, according to the report of the Committee, is the internationalisation of all university courses. To this end the Committee would like all university studies to start with a three-week multidisciplinary introductory course. This course would, for example, describe briefly international relations, examine problems facing mankind (e.g. the ecological crisis, demographic problems, the energy crisis, the arms race), and shed light on the role of the sciences

in coming to grips with these problems. Thus the introductory course would put the university studies in a world-wide perspective.

Language training

Language departments in Swedish universities have focused almost exclusively on the training of prospective language teachers and linguistic specialists. The Committee would like these departments to make greater provision in future for the language training of all university students and thus become service departments for the various discipline-based units. A shift of emphasis in this direction should be encouraged because all graduates will have increasing need of skills in foreign languages. This need cannot be completely met by language training in the primary and secondary schools.

Exchange programme

The Committee is of the opinion that a major instrument in any programme aimed at internationalisation of studies must be the international exchange of personnel, and has made a number of recommendations in this area.

Financial assistance towards study abroad should be maintained, and it should be made easier for Swedish students to receive credit for courses followed abroad. Foreign education should be allowed to count for Swedish degree requirements, even if the courses do not meet Swedish curriculum demands in all respects.

Foreign students should be encouraged to study in Sweden and a special effort should be made to offer courses conceived for foreigners and at post-graduate level. Scholarships should in consequence be increased in number.

Swedish university teachers and researchers appointed to posts abroad should receive increased financial support. Greater participation of foreign university staff members should be encouraged in university work. For this purpose universities should have funds available to allow them to engage visiting lecturers and researchers and support should be given to staff willing to exchange posts with a foreign colleague. Furthermore, the Committee proposes establishing 30 posts for visiting professors and 30 posts for visiting research fellows.

Implementation

Some of the Committee's proposals have already been implemented. Those entailing increased expenditure and therefore subject to parliamentary approval, will, it is expected, be put into effect at the start of the 1976/77 academic year.

37,017.7 (485)

Current Sweden, The Swedish Institute, No. 38 ; B.P.

UNITED KINGDOM : FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

The total education and science budget will reach nearly £5,000 million in 1978-79 according to the government's public expenditure White Paper published at the end of January. The White Paper reveals an annual average growth rate for education of 2.7%, rising from £4,292 m in 1974-75 to £4,774 m in 1978-79 at 1974 prices.

"The demand for education in the coming years is now forecast to grow at a slower rate than was expected 12 months ago," the White Paper says. "There are several reasons for this change. First, the birthrate projections are lower. Secondly, the latest evidence shows that earlier forecasts of the number of children

staying on at school beyond the statutory school leaving age were too high. Thirdly, the number of pupils qualified to enter higher education is now expected to increase less rapidly than in earlier projections, and of those who are qualified, fewer seem likely now to enter it so that the continuing expansion of higher education will be at a slower rate."

These demographic and related changes reduce the forecasts of expenditure which are directly related to pupil and student numbers. Thus within a growth rate of 2.7% a year it is estimated that it will be possible to provide for the continued development of nursery education, for some improvement and replacement of school buildings and for a substantial special school building programme.

The trend may well be towards a reduction of demand for higher education places, but universities are at present facing severe financial difficulties, and at the end of 1974 the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals took the unprecedented step of publishing the full text of a memorandum to Mr. R. PRENTICE, Secretary of State for Education and Science, expressing its anxiety about the situation. The memorandum explains that at a time of great national economic difficulty the universities have willingly accepted that they must bear their fair share of cuts in public expenditure. "The fact is, however, that the universities are facing a loss in value, in real terms, of their grants for the current session of an amount well in excess of £30 m." University costs rose in 1974 at the rate of over 20% in comparison with an anticipated rate of below 8%.

"The universities have economised in the whole area of their operations," the memorandum states. "They have cut to the minimum their expenditure on services by introducing energy saving programmes, postponing all but basic maintenance of buildings and plant, and making all possible economies in their purchases. The universities are examining the case for each new post, whether academic, administrative or supporting, and are deferring all but the essential; they are scrutinizing each post becoming vacant and filling only those which are absolutely necessary.

Even with these economies all universities will incur large deficits in 1974/75. Unless the government comes to their aid, the universities will reach the critical point at which they will not have enough money to pay their staff and their suppliers."

The memorandum notes that the rate of growth in student numbers is likely to be less than was envisaged in the White Paper "Education: a framework for expansion" (cf. News-Letter 6/1972), but points out that any downward adjustment of the original target for 1976/77 cannot produce a pro rata reduction in recurrent costs.

Forced redundancies in 1974/75 have been precluded by a government grant of £15 m. made in January. Earlier press estimates suggested that at least £16 m. and probably £22 m. would be required to meet university needs.

37,014,543 (41-4) The Times Higher Education Supplement; 10/1/75; The Times Educational Supplement; 31/1/75; W.F.B.

UNITED KINGDOM : SIZE OF TEACHING FORCE

The government's target for the size of the teaching force has been fixed at a maximum of 480 490,000 by 1981. The government had been planning for 510,000 teachers in the 1972 White Paper "Education - a framework for expansion" (see News-Letter 6/1972), but policy was revised as the latest population figures became available. The new lower target will mean that some 30 colleges of education will have to give up initial teacher training, though as many as possible will be used for other educational purposes.

Just under 60,000 places will be needed for training new teachers and for in-service courses, in comparison with the 110,000 places now available. In the next three years the intake of students to colleges will

drop dramatically from the already agreed 30,000 for this September to 23,000 in 1976, 17,000 in 1977 and 12,000 in 1978 and subsequent years.

Because the projections of the demand for teachers and of the birthrate have been so inaccurate in the past, the Department of Education and Science has put forward "high" and "low" variants which could cover such eventualities as a dramatic upturn in the number of babies born or a continuation of the current downward trend. Total school population projections are given on this basis. On the one hand, there could be 9.07 million children in 1981 and 9.14 million in 1986. Alternatively, it could be 8.3 million in 1981 and 6.7 million five years later.

To eliminate classes of more than 30 pupils in both primary and secondary schools the Department estimates that 511,000 teachers will be needed by 1981 and 469,000 by 1986. It is not clear whether the government has opted for class size as the key to the teaching force target or whether the 480,000-490,000 target announced by Mr. R. PRENTICE, Secretary of State for Education and Science, is an economically acceptable figure which will incidentally influence the size of classes.

The government's announcement has been given a cool reception by the unions. They take the view that a golden opportunity is being rejected to improve the quality of education by reducing the size of classes.

371.12 : 37.014.542.2 (41-4) The Times Educational Supplement, 28/III/75 ; W.F.B.

UNITED KINGDOM : THE OPEN UNIVERSITY CONSOLIDATES ITS POSITION

With a total of more than 5,300 graduates this year the Open University can claim to be producing 8%-9% of the country's new graduates.

Of the 19,581 students who took up their studies four years ago when the Open University opened, 6,650 (34%) have now graduated. However, the time students are taking over their studies is proving longer than originally expected, the average student taking perhaps five or six years to complete the graduate course. This factor may force the university to reduce its intake of new students, even though demand is still remaining high.

Announcing the new list of graduates in January, Sir Walter PERRY, vice-chancellor of the Open University, paid tribute to the perseverance of Open University students. He said that it appeared likely that 50%-60% of the first year's intake would end up with degrees. The rate of success of students is, of course, a crucial factor in the cost per graduate calculations (see News-Letter 3/1972).

The success of the Open University in the field of educational publishing has resulted in a re-examination of its publications division. The Open University has become one of the largest and most rapidly expanding educational publishers in the United Kingdom. Its products include books, tapes, films and scientific home experiment kits with half of its orders coming from overseas.

In January the Open University opened a consultancy service in Washington. This is the first Open University office outside the United Kingdom. Its task is to advise American clients on how to use learning-at-a-distance techniques, selling a total system as well as individual components. The consultancy will offer three things : the teaching materials themselves, advice on how to prepare them, advice on how to put them to optimum use (broadcasting, study centres, summer schools, etc.). The object is not to thrust the same package on everyone, but to adapt to individual needs. Collaboration of this kind was used by the universities of Houston, Maryland and Rutgers in 1972 to set up distance learning programmes in conjunction with the Open University, and these schemes are a model for the new consulting service. It is envisaged that the Open University consultancy service will extend beyond academic institutions and appeal to trusts, foundations, commerce and industry.

371.684 : 374.72 (41-4) Education, 14/II/75 ; The Times Educational Supplement, 17/I/75 ; W.F.B.

UNITED KINGDOM : TEACHING OF THE MOTHER TONGUE

After publication in 1972 of the results of a survey concerning reading standards conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research, which revealed that standards had not progressed between 1964 and 1971/72 as regards 15-year-olds and that for 11-year-olds there had possibly even been a decline, a committee under the chairmanship of Sir Alan BULLOCK was set up to consider:

- all aspects of teaching the use of English, including reading, writing and speech ;
- how present practice might be improved and the role that initial and in-service training might play ;
- to what extent arrangements for monitoring the general level of attainment in these skills can be introduced or improved.

The Bullock Committee was reluctant to single out one main recommendation. "We have been opposed from the outset to the idea that reading and the use of English can be improved in any simple way. The solution does not lie in a few neat administrative strokes, nor in the adoption of one set of teaching methods to the exclusion of another."

The principal recommendations are :

- A system of monitoring, with new instruments that can assess a wider range of attainments than has been attempted in the past.
- Positive steps to develop the language ability of children in the pre-school, nursery and infant years, including the involvement of parents, the improvement of staffing ratios in infant schools, and the employment of teachers' aides whose training has included a language element.
- A systematic policy in every school for the development of the reading competence of pupils at all ages and ability levels.
- An organised policy for language across the curriculum in every school, establishing every teacher's involvement in language and reading development.
- A qualified teacher with responsibility for advising and supporting teachers in language teaching and the teaching of reading in every school.
- Close consultation between schools and transmission of effective records to ensure continuity in the teaching and the language development of every pupil.
- Improved resources in terms of staffing, accommodation and ancillary help for English in secondary schools.
- A specialist English adviser and advisory team in every local education authority area to support schools in all respects of language in education.
- Screening procedures to prevent cumulative language and reading failure and to guarantee individual diagnosis and treatment.
- Additional help to pupils retarded in reading. Where they are withdrawn from classes for special help, they should continue to receive support on their return.
- A reading clinic or remedial centre in every local authority area giving access to a comprehensive

diagnostic service and expert medical, psychological and teaching help.

- Greatly increased provision for adult illiterates and semiliterates, and a national reference point for co-ordination of information and support.
- More substantial and sustained tuition for children of families of overseas origin, with more advisers and specialist teachers.
- A standing working party with representatives from the Department of Education and Science and the local education authorities to consider capitation allowances and the resources of schools. A satisfactory level of book provision should be its first subject of inquiry.
- A substantial course on language in education (including reading) for all teachers in training, whatever their subject or the age of the children they will teach.
- An expansion of in-service education in reading and other aspects of English teaching, with courses at diploma and higher degree level.
- A national centre for language in education, concerned with the teaching of English in all its aspects from the early years to advanced studies with sixth forms.

The central contention is that schools should pay more attention to children's language at all levels, not merely reading, but also talking, listening and writing. All these involve complex skills, and teachers should intervene positively to make sure that children acquire them. The Committee is critical of teachers in primary and secondary schools who "so misunderstand modern methods as to believe that they should never directly teach the children". It is no less critical of those who believe that skills can be taught by kits or exercises in isolation from pupils' other work. There is no evidence, the report says, that grammar, spelling and punctuation exercises improve writing, unless they are taught at a time when they fit individual pupils' needs.

The Committee found that reading for pleasure often gets left out at both primary and secondary levels, teachers being more concerned with skills in isolation than in getting children to enjoy books. This was found to be particularly true in the case of children who were experiencing learning difficulties.

The teachers' unions gave a warm welcome to the report. They were favourably impressed by the suggestion that all teachers should be trained to teach reading and the use of English, but were somewhat suspicious of the suggestion that greater use should be made of trained ancillaries. Spokesmen for the local education authorities expressed the hope that the report would not be ignored in the manner of the Russell report on adult education. The National Union of Students was pleased that the report recognised that courses in colleges of education were far too academic and paid insufficient attention to practical aspects of teaching. The National Foundation for Educational Research has indicated its willingness, given the necessary funds, to monitor language standards along the lines indicated in the report.

Commenting on the statement by Mr. R. PRENTICE, Secretary for Education and Science, that recommendations needing extra money would have to be shelved, Sir Alan Bullock said: "If every head and principal and administrator were to sit down with their staff and say: 'What can we do with existing resources and personnel?', we would see a dramatic improvement in the standards of language work in a few years. And if we don't get that change in attitudes, lashing out millions of pounds won't do it."

372,461 (41-4)

The Times Educational Supplement, 21/II/75; W.F.B.

UNITED KINGDOM : FRENCH IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The evaluation by the National Foundation for Educational Research (Burstall, Clare et al. : Primary French in the Balance, Windsor, NFER, 1974) of the ten-year pilot experiment in teaching French in the primary school reaches the overall judgment that there is not much to be gained from introducing pupils to a foreign language at the age of eight years. The authors find it hard to escape the conclusion that "the weight of the evidence has combined with the balance of opinion to tip the scales against a possible expansion of the teaching of French in primary schools".

The NFER evaluation covered the years 1964-74 and took the form of a longitudinal study of 18,000 pupils attending 125 primary schools taking part in the experiment. The sample covered children of varying ability from all social levels.

General attainment

A survey of all-round attainment in the primary school has shown fairly conclusively that the introduction of French did not exert any significant influence on the children's other attainments. They did not seem to be held back from acquiring the basic skills of reading and calculation, but neither did they become more proficient in using their mother tongue. At the secondary level there appeared to be more loss than profit. Schools reported that primary French had a negative effect on the teaching of other foreign languages ; it strengthened the position of French as the dominant foreign language and increased the number of pupils who arrived at the secondary school convinced that learning languages was beyond them.

Ability range

The evaluatory study revealed that even the least able pupils could have some success in the early stages of learning French, although it rarely lasted long. On the debit side there were many children who failed to achieve even a modicum of success. The basic cause of the failure of the experiment with many children was the teachers' failure to differentiate French teaching objectives according to the varying needs and capabilities of their pupils. "It is cruelly naïve," the report observes, "to cling to the belief that by introducing French at an early age all children will begin their study of the language from an equal standpoint." By the age of eight, the report points out, some children are already very proficient in the use of their own language, while others are inarticulate and still struggling with the initial stages of learning to read and write.

Permanence of early experience

Supporters of the project had predicted that by gaining early experience of learning a foreign language pupils would have an advantage which would endure. The evaluation reveals this prediction ill-founded. Pupils do not subsequently show any significant gains in achievement. When compared at the age of 16 with pupils who started to learn French at age 11, the primary French group showed consistent superiority in one area only - that of listening comprehension - and even here they were only slightly ahead.

Teaching methods

The study was unable to identify any one method as being particularly effective. Rather it showed that no single method was appropriate for all pupils. Able pupils fared better with a traditional grammar-based approach, while the less able tended to react favourably to audio-visual methods. "There are," says the report, "certain aspects of learning French which children of all levels of achievement tend to reject, such as the enforced passivity, repetition and incomprehension associated with the use of the tape-recorder, and the practice of reading French aloud, which for most pupils acts as a source of embarrassment and a barrier to understanding."

Organisation

Many organisational difficulties at the primary level stemmed from the fact that the regular class teacher was not always able to teach French. Lack of flexibility resulted and made the truly integrated day impossible. At the secondary level, the schools found difficulty in providing for an intake with varying levels of experience in the learning of French. This meant that some children went over again what had been learned in the primary school with a consequent dampening effect on their enthusiasm. Others had to adapt to radically different teaching techniques.

Influence of the evaluation study

Given the unimpressive results revealed by the evaluation, education authorities are likely to be reluctant to increase facilities for the teaching of French in primary schools. The experiment is not likely to be abandoned, however, in view of the heavy investments already made, and critics of the evaluation have questioned the validity of judging primary French by the success, or otherwise, of the minority who were still studying French at the age of 15 or 16. What is disturbing is the discovery of the extent to which early failure can prejudice pupils against learning a foreign language later.

804.0 : 373.3 (41-4)

Education, 27/XII/74 ; The Times Educational Supplement, 17/I/75 ; W.F.B.

UNITED KINGDOM : COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO TEACHERS' PAY

The Committee of Inquiry into Teachers' Pay, under the chairmanship of Lord HOUGHTON, published its report at the end of December 1974, in which it recommends an average pay increase of 26% in salaries, thus adding £432 m. to the cost of non-university teachers' salaries.

The Committee had been set up as the result of widespread dissatisfaction among teachers who saw their salaries falling in relation to those of other comparable professions. The government, when promising unconditionally to implement the Committee's recommendations, made it clear that it regarded teachers as a special case at a time when counter-inflation legislation was in force. As the first independent committee appointed to examine teachers' salaries for 30 years, the Houghton Committee took the opportunity to reflect generally on the teaching profession as well as dealing with salary technicalities.

There is no doubt that teaching has become more demanding, the report says. The content and techniques of education are changing more rapidly than they have ever done, requiring flexibility and new enthusiasm from teachers, particularly those who have been trained in more formal methods. Changes in examinations and the raising of the school leaving age have made it necessary to review the basic curricula. Pastoral guidance and involvement with parents take both time and energy. Older pupils are more sophisticated and are maturing earlier, and while the average age of the pupils in secondary schools has increased, the average age of the teachers is probably lower than it has ever been and there are comparatively few in the middle age group. Many staff therefore have to take heavy responsibilities early in their careers.

Our proposals, the report continues, will place a heavy burden on local authorities and taxpayers. This burden is justified in our view because the teaching profession should be paid adequately, and teachers should enjoy reasonable careers. But if the community shoulders the increased cost, teachers must also accept an obligation to use their professional power and expertise in the community's service. In a changing world we all, and parents in particular, look to teachers to promote the educational and social values of rationality and of independent judgment, and to foster maturity in both personal relationships and the approach to work. We wish to stress that we believe the salary levels we recommend justify expectation of professional standards of performance in return. As in other professions, these salary levels are in part recognition of the fact that the job cannot be compressed within a rigid structure of prescribed duties, hours or days. The majority of teachers, we believe, approach their

task in this spirit. They accept a full measure of responsibility to society and to the community of which they and their school, centre or college are a part. They spend time in and out of the classroom in educational and pastoral activities with pupils and students. They share with parents the responsibility for the development and education of all their pupils. After the family, the teacher is the most important influence on the next generation.

37.087.4 (41-4)

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